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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

MARCH 1913

EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

The New York school inquiry has continued to attract attention during the month. Preliminary reports have been put into the hands of the New York newspapers, and widespread comment has been heard on the various recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry. Professor Hanus was good enough to supply the *Elementary School Teacher* with the following summary which constitutes the closing paragraphs of his general summary of the report:

It is clear that in spite of the progress the public-school system of New York City has made since the consolidation, it is seriously defective. It needs thorough reorganization in respect to its administration by the Board of Education and the supervisory staff; and in respect to its general system of supervision. The Board of Education needs a clear conception of its functions, and should come to close quarters with its work. The Board of Superintendents fulfils no useful function and should be abolished. In the general system of supervision, helpful co-operation under leadership should replace bureaucratic control. The Board of Examiners is decidedly efficient, but needs reorganization to improve and maintain its efficiency. The courses of study for elementary schools and for high schools need thoroughgoing revision, and flexibility should replace rigidity in their administration. The quality of the teaching in the elementary schools, at least, is in general not good, though sometimes good to excellent. The provisions for the discovery, segregation, and appropriate treatment of mentally defective children are quite inadequate, and need immediate attention. The compulsory attendance service is inefficient; it emphasizes police functions rather than preventive measures, and the staff greatly needs reorganization on a functional basis. The recognized advantages of intermediate schools in relieving congestion have not led to the further establishment of such schools, and no attempt has been made to realize the exceptional educational opportunities these schools

afford; promotions and non-promotions are not studied so as to yield a real basis for a maximum rate of promotion; part-time classes should be abolished; the estimated need of teachers for elementary schools and for high schools is not based on indisputable and well-organized data. The provision for industrial education is so meager as to be almost negligible; neither industrial nor commercial education is so maintained as to secure the necessary effective co-operation of industry and commerce, and co-operative and continuation schools are wholly absent. Habitual self-scrutiny and an appeal to well-conducted investigations and experiments to secure the necessary data to confirm or refute educational opinion and furnish the regulative for all the activities of the school system and for its adequate financial support are lacking.

The executive officers of the National Education Association have authorized a campaign for the collection of a million dollars.

National Education Association and the Million Dollar Fund This fund is to be used, according to the official announcement, for the purpose of promoting the activities of the Association. A statement is given of the resources and expenses of the organization, and it is evident from this statement that the society is in need of funds if it is to carry on anything beyond the most routine activities. The official announcement also suggests, although in a very nebulous way, that the fund is to promote scientific studies.

Comment on this announcement may be ungracious if it is not enthusiastic at the present very immature stage of the campaign. Everyone is so familiar with large endowments for educational undertakings that the effort to secure a million dollars seems less pretentious at the present time than ever before in the history of the country. Yet it is to be pointed out that people who are to be intrusted with this amount of money shall have a definite program of expenditure to present to the philanthropists who are called upon to contribute funds. One is led to inquire, therefore, what are the probable channels through which the National Association would be likely to direct the income from such funds. If the Committee on Rural Education is to be supported in its endeavor to bring the rural schools to the level of efficiency of city schools, there can be little doubt that enthusiastic support for that undertaking would be forthcoming. If the Committee on Economy of Time in the Public Schools could be assured that its work would be supported and carried on in such a way as to lead to definite economies in school practice, there would be justification in asking for public

support. In short, one might enumerate a long list of investigations that need to be made.

On the other hand one must admit that there is a danger that the income from a million dollars will be used in investigations which are not easily recognized as of great public importance. The National Education Association has unfortunately not kept its reputation perfectly clear during the last few years in the matter of a scramble for office. There have been certain domestic infelicities within the organization that lead one to fear that an increased income would create a temptation for new trouble rather than a cure for ancient wrongs. Would it not be well, now that the campaign has been announced, for some of the leading members of this organization to get together and plan definite lines of scientific research, contributing their time and energy to the cause until they have raised that cause to the level of obvious necessity? If educational workers are to convince people of this country that they are to be trusted with large endowments, they must continue for a time to make the sacrifices which are so familiar to every school worker. Committees must meet and time and energy must be spent in the voluntary effort to better schools. This voluntary energy must prove its capacity to bring about useful reforms in education. Useful reforms will then get proper support.

The *Handbook for the School for Apprentices* of the Lakeside Press of Chicago describes an experiment in industrial education which is worthy of general attention. The school was organized in July, 1908. It grew out of the need of a large printing establishment for properly qualified workmen. The school is in the printing plant itself, and is supplied with all of the appliances of an ordinary school. Boys are taken into this school at the level which is known as that of "pre-apprentices." At this stage they spend one and three-fourths hours daily doing academic work. This time is devoted to lessons in design, mathematics, English, elementary science, and history. The rest of the time is spent in shop work. The boys thus become acquainted with all the foundations of the art to which they are to devote themselves when they become qualified workmen. The pre-apprentice course is completed at the end of two years. The

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boys are sixteen years of age at this time. They now enter the factory as regular apprentices and learn some one of the trades in the different branches of the printing business.

The contact which the boys have had with practical work in the pre-apprenticeship period helps them to find the phases of the work which are most congenial to them. At the same time, the foremen of the different departments have an opportunity to learn the characteristics of the different boys, so that a selection of work is made which is advantageous to the establishment as well as to the boys themselves. During the period of apprenticeship the boys have an opportunity to continue their studies. Indeed, they have learned one important lesson in the school in which they were prepared for their apprenticeship, namely, the lesson of combining practical industry with academic work. Such schools as this undoubtedly furnish encouragement to those who are disposed to regard the problem of industrial education as a problem of a type somewhat different from that which is faced in the ordinary school. On the other hand, it requires very little modification of the usual school program to take advantage of this example. Printing is so closely related to the regular school work that there is every justification for the introduction of printing into the regular school course. The design which can be taught in the printing class is more practical in character and quite as perfect in form as that which is taught in the regular drawing class. The students can be made to appreciate books through their contact with the methods of making books perhaps even better than through the study of books which are put into their hands in finished form. The advantages of academic training are emphasized by the use made of these subjects in the Lakeside School quite as much as are the advantages of practical courses.

The Conference for Education in Texas was organized in 1907 and is composed of citizens of the state who are sufficiently interested in its educational progress to give to the cause for Education their service, their money, and their moral support. It has an executive board composed of prominent laymen as well as some of the leading educators of the state. A salaried secretary is employed and an office is maintained in the

capital of the state from which most of the work of the organization is done.

The Conference has led state-wide campaigns which have resulted in four constitutional amendments which are of immense value to the schools from both a financial and an administrative point of view. It also furnishes model plans for school buildings and has sent out more than 400,000 bulletins in behalf of rural high schools, school buildings, and educational progress.

The work of the Conference can best be summed up by saying that it serves as a great publicity bureau for the educational forces of the state, and is in line with the policies adopted by other great activities of the state.

So far it has been maintained by the voluntary contributions of the teachers of the state. In this way more than \$30,000 has been raised. A movement is now under way to raise a permanent endowment fund from subscriptions of all those who are interested in the educational progress in the state.

Conservative men are free to say that the efforts of the Conference will advance education in Texas more in the next ten years than would otherwise be possible in twenty-five years.

C. T. GRAY

The following news item is quoted in full from the announcement of the Bureau of Education:

Facts about Teachers Not more than one in every five public-school teachers in the United States is professionally trained to the extent of being a graduate of a teachers' training course, according to a bulletin on rural-school teachers just issued by the United States Bureau of Education. In fact, A. C. Monahan and R. H. Wright, the authors of the bulletin, point out that this ratio represents only the highest possible estimate; that the actual conditions are even less favorable.

It is in the rural schools that the problem of securing competent teachers has been most acute. The attention of educational leaders has in the past been occupied by the rapid growth of the urban systems and the rural schools have been neglected. The trained teachers, themselves often the product of the country, have been attracted to the cities and towns by higher salaries and better prospects. There was formerly little inclination to appraise rural teaching at its full value, either in pay or position, and the better teachers left the country schools as soon as they gained experience.

Raising the standard of rural teachers by dignifying rural-school work as a special field of high importance is already attracting better trained teachers to

the country. It is now generally demanded that the teacher for the country school have a special training for the work. "The rural teacher," says the bulletin, "needs the same courses in education and the same general methods of teaching as the town or city teacher. He needs, however, in place of some of the academic subjects of secondary or collegiate grade, additional courses in natural and physical sciences, particularly in their applications, and in nature-study, elementary agriculture, domestic economy, sanitation, rural economics, and rural sociology."

Three main agencies are attempting to meet the demand for trained rural teachers: the normal school, the county training school, and the high school. The bulletin describes the work of each of these agencies and selects typical examples from different sections of the country for more detailed description. State normal schools at Bellingham, Wash., Harrisonburg, Va., and Athens, Ga., are discussed as examples of normal schools that offer regular courses for rural-school teachers, based on the special needs of their respective localities.

In other state normals there are departments of rural education, as in those of Michigan; the Illinois State Normal School at Normal; the Kirksville Normal School at Kirksville, Mo.; and five Wisconsin normal schools. The rural education department of the Western State Normal School at Kalamazoo, Mich., is considered typical of this group. One-year courses for rural teachers are offered at Valley City, N.Dak., Lewiston, Idaho, and Greenville, N.C. Certain county normal schools are designed solely for the preparation of rural teachers, as in Wisconsin. So great has been the lack of trained teachers in rural education that the high schools have been pressed into service. Thirteen states have organized teacher-training courses in the public high schools or in close connection with them.

A publication has just come to hand from Clark University which contains the catalogue of the Department of School Hygiene

Clark Educational Museum of the Educational Museum of that University. New York and Chicago have enjoyed, within the past two years, an opportunity to see in a very complete form exhibits of all of the municipal activities undertaken for child-welfare. These exhibits are of such large educational value that they will undoubtedly be repeated in some form in the future. In the meantime, Clark University and several other institutions for the training of teachers have recognized the advantages of such exhibitions of material to the extent of beginning permanent collections of the type represented in this catalogue. The Clark Hygiene Museum contains exhibits of appliances for the prevention of diseases, for the proper nutrition of young children and school children; it contains drawings and suggestions for school buildings

and for school sanitation; and it deals with the problems of the playground and testing apparatus. It also gives material dealing with normal and abnormal physiological development. The catalogue now issued contains a list of firms from whom material can be obtained, in this way making it possible for other institutions to take advantage of the experience of this museum.

In the state of Tennessee the legislature is considering a bill which, if enacted into a law, will give that state compulsory education. The northern states have had compulsory education long enough so that the objections to such laws are no longer heard in these states. The discussion going on in Tennessee gives an opportunity to look back into the history of compulsory education in a very concrete and vivid way. The *Nashville Banner* discusses the matter in the following editorial:

A correspondent who is opposed to compulsory education in a communication published elsewhere on this page, says: "The education of my children is more my private business than it is the public business."

What is written here is not intended to be controversial or to make any argument pro or con on the subject of compulsory education. It is intended only to remark that the sentiment expressed by this correspondent—and it is a very common sentiment—shows in quite an interesting way the difference between the old idea and the new—the simple plan of a pioneer democracy and the progressive thought of a populous state.

The education of a man's children, according to the latter view, does not mean more to him than it does to the public. A man may be stupid, illiterate, or selfish, but advanced thought does not concede that he has the right, moral or otherwise, to afflict the state with future citizens of his own kind simply because he prefers that sort or is careless of his public duty.

A man's children are his charge, but not his slaves. They are also the children of the state, and it is the state's duty to see that they have every advantage it is able to give them.

A man can be compelled to bear arms and fight battles in defense of the country. He must also defend it against the backwardness and brutality that come of an ignorant citizenship.

If the state for the state's good proposes to educate the children of the state, people too ignorant and prejudiced to appreciate the value of education should not be allowed to thwart that design and impose ignorance upon the children.

The parent has no right to maim or imprison a child. He has no more right to cripple its intellect or to deprive it of the advantage of education.

This is the modern view and the view that prevails in most advanced

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communities. It is not tyranny to the parent but justice to the child and to the state itself.

A parent would be punished under the law for starving a child's body, why should he be allowed to starve its mind?

This same correspondent says: "We, the common people of the rural districts, know better what we need than the people of wealth and leisure in the towns and cities do." We can give the correspondent perfect assurance that "the people of wealth and leisure" in the cities, or elsewhere, are not worrying about school problems. They are in the main a selfish lot who devote little attention to anything but their own pleasure and advantage and some of them object to being taxed for school purposes. Plans for educational advancement come from men and women who think and who are mostly toilers, as much so as those who delve in the fields. They are people who believe in the elevation of the masses, in equal advantage, and would as far as possible abolish the causes that lead to poverty and human degradation. The "people of wealth and leisure" don't worry with such things.

And, furthermore, what is done in this respect must be done by the people themselves through their representatives in the Legislature, and the rural population in Tennessee is still much greater than that of the towns and cities.

The following news item reports a type of co-operation which teachers should interest themselves in promoting. Either State Public Departments or Teachers' Associations should do Teachers' this work. The item is copied from the *Minneapolis Agency Journal*.

The teachers of Minnesota, through the State Educational Association, are asking for the establishment of a state teachers' agency in connection with the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There is merit in the suggestion. The teachers' agencies are the present intermediaries between school boards needing teachers and teachers needing employment. It is an important work well discharged, but the whole burden of its expense falls on the teachers, who are already underpaid. The fee of 5 per cent of salary is collected from the teacher for whom a position is found. The revenues to the agencies are estimated at fifty thousand dollars a year or more. A state teachers' agency could, it is believed, be maintained in effective operation for thirty-five hundred dollars a year. It would be a fine and helpful thing and would save the poor teacher money he or she can ill afford to lose.

Another educational reform that commends itself to the judgment is that designed to make county superintendents appointive, non-political officials. This change is asked for by the State Association of County Superintendents, who realize better than anyone else what a handicap politics and partisanship are to their work. The measure suggested provides that the county superintendents, instead of being elected as now, be appointed by a county school board made up of representatives from each of the school districts. The bill

would put this important position somewhat on a par with that of superintendent of city schools. The effort to require candidates to have certain attainments along professional lines failed for constitutional reasons. The right to run for office could not be thus abridged! The measure now offered evades this difficulty and seeks to put this important office on a securely non-partisan and professional basis.

The following paragraph is clipped from the *Tribune* of Duluth, Minn.:

Municipal government will hereafter play a prominent part in the day's work at the Longfellow School, Sixtieth Avenue West and Elinor Street. The administration of the conduct of the pupils will be in charge of the Young Citizens' Association. This association is modeled on the plan of the political parties, with the exception that there is no "opposition" to stir up trouble. At an election held the first of the week, a complete set of city officers was elected. They will take their oaths of office this morning and will assume their duties Monday. The plan of government is on the same order as under the old ward system. The association was formed for two purposes—to instil in the minds of the pupils a knowledge of and interest in the administration of municipal affairs and to bring more closely to home the responsibilities of self-government. The pupils will participate in the making of all laws governing their conduct and the officers will see that these laws are observed. The workings of the various departments will be explained and it is probable that, later on, various city officials will be requested to speak on some of the mooted questions.

A ruling given by the Indiana attorney-general is reported in the *Indianapolis News* as follows:

Attorney-General Honan today gave an opinion to Charles A. Greathouse, state superintendent of public instruction, in which he held that the usual decision of school officials and parents with regard to the legality of taking children out of school as soon as they are fourteen years old, is not correct. Mr. Honan's opinion, which was requested by the state superintendent to clear up numerous questions on the subject, is that under the truancy laws the child must attend school "between the ages of seven and fourteen years inclusive." The statute means that the child must attend school until the close of his fourteenth year, the attorney-general held. The usual interpretation of the law throughout Indiana has been that of allowing the child to leave school—if such action was desired—at the beginning of the fourteenth year, thus evading the law by an entire year, according to the state official.

John J. Walsh, state factory inspector, under whose jurisdiction the

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enforcement of the child-labor laws in Indiana falls, said today that he had been enforcing the child-labor laws only up to the time the child entered his fourteenth year. He said, however, that he would examine the truancy law at once and confer with the attorney-général as to whether the latter's opinion would affect the administration of the child-labor law. The child-labor law uses the phrase "no child under fourteen years" in handling the age limit proposition.

The ruling seems to be of very doubtful validity. The question which it raises is, however, one of large general importance.

School officers everywhere will recognize the wisdom of the state superintendent of Colorado as exhibited in the recommendation reported in the following news item copied from the *Denver Post*:

Officers In the biennial report just issued by Mrs. Helen M. Wixson, state superintendent of public instruction, a number of recommendations have been made to the legislature.

The most important is the recommendation that the terms of the superintendent of public instruction and county superintendents be increased from two to four years and that the offices be taken out of politics by holding a special election, the names of candidates to go on by petition and there being no indication of the politics of the candidate.

It is urged by Mrs. Wixson that it is impossible to get plans well under way and obtain results in less than four years.

"Our schools are among the best, but there is always room for improvement and nothing would give greater impetus to growth than a change in the constitution providing for a four-year term in the office of state and also of county superintendent and the removal of these offices from the turmoil of politics," says the report.

Other legislation recommended is provision for a state school visitor who shall relieve the state school superintendent of public instruction of the necessity of traveling over the state constantly, to keep watch over the schools; the formulation of a law for medical examination of school children by specialists and trained nurses; publication and use of the state course of study.

The Bureau of Education has issued a statement with regard to the place of women in the public schools. The facts reported in this news item are as follows:

Women in Administration of Public Schools How women have advanced from the educational ranks to the highest administrative positions in the public schools is interestingly revealed in figures just compiled by the United States Bureau of Education. Four states—Colorado, Idaho, Washington, and Wyoming—have women at the head of their state school

systems, and there are now 495 women county superintendents in the United States, nearly double the number of ten years ago.

In some states women appear to have almost a monopoly of the higher positions in the public-school system. Wyoming has a woman state superintendent; the deputy state superintendent is a woman; and of the fourteen counties in the state, all but one are directed educationally by women. In Montana, where there are thirty counties, only one man is reported as holding the position of county superintendent.

The increase in the number of women county superintendents is most conspicuous in the West, but is not confined to that section. New York reports 42 women "district superintendents," as against 12 "school commissioners" in 1900. Other states showing marked increases are—Iowa, from 13 in 1900 to 44 in 1912; Kansas, from 26 in 1900 to 49 in 1912; Nebraska, from 10 to 42 in the same period; North Dakota from 10 to 24; Oklahoma, 7 to 14. In only two states is a decrease reported—Tennessee had 9 in 1900 and only 5 in 1912, and Utah has one less than a decade ago.

Together with the advancement of women in the administrative branch of education has come a demand for women on local school boards, and this demand has been recognized in many communities. The following cities of 100,000 population or over report one or more women on the school board: New York, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Washington, Indianapolis, Rochester, St. Paul, Denver, Columbus, Worcester, Grand Rapids, Cambridge, and Fall River. Numerous smaller municipalities have adopted the idea.

The important place assigned to women in American education has become so usual as to excite little comment in this country; yet American conditions in this respect are the reverse of those of most nations. It is probably safe to say that in no other country in the world are there as many women teachers proportionally as in the United States; in fact men teachers greatly outnumber the women in most European countries.

In many of the cases described above the explanation of the fact that women have been advanced to high administrative positions is to be found in the fact that in the states where the women have been enfranchised the one political office which it is easy to turn over to them is the office of school superintendent in either state or county. The fact that the women have filled the ranks of teachers in the school is so familiar that it is not a subject for frequent comment, but this new fact that school administration is coming into the hands of women in many states is a unique development worthy of comment.